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THURSDAY, APRIL 21, 2016

South Niagara left out

Communities have concern about
 Niagara Region growth strategy
 Page 3

New hope found

Niagara College to support
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 Page 15

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Better transit needed



Niagara College general business student Adam Roy, 20, catches the Welland/Port Colborne link bus last Tuesday afternoon. See story on page 2.

MICHELLE ALLENBERG/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

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UPFRONT

Transit failing for Port

MICHELLE ALLENBERG
Postmedia Network

College and university students living in Port Colborne feel like they're getting a rough ride.

They have voiced concerns about public transit — and Port Colborne's transit advisory committee has heard them.

The committee has asked the city for a better functioning transit system. Last Monday night, city councillors discussed transit issues which students face when travelling from the lake-side city to their post-secondary classes.

Ward 2 Coun. Yvon Doucet said some students are waiting about four hours for a bus. He would like to see this time lessened.

Doucet said right now the bus system is not functional, adding that many people end up buying a vehicle because that option is easier and faster.

"Students cannot get to their classes until 11 a.m. They also only get back to their homes four hours after their classes. We want to make something functional," Doucet said to fellow councillors.

Adam Roy, a 20-year-old Niagara College student, said the time between buses can be long. He said sometimes he must wait about four hours and he feel like he is waiting forever to get home.

Some of the hours are wasted," Roy said.

College student Kate Boychuk, 23, also complained about long wait times. Although she has never missed class taking public transit, she said the



MICHELLE ALLENBERG/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Niagara College general business student Adam Roy, 20, catches the Welland-Port Colborne link bus last Tuesday afternoon.

schedule is "actually awful."

"I'm stuck going to school early or stuck at school late," she said.

During the week the first bus leaves Port Colborne City Hall is 7:15 a.m., and the last bus leaves at 6:20 p.m. The first bus leaves Niagara College is 7:40 a.m. and the last bus leaves at 6:45 p.m.

The bus schedule doesn't only affect students.

Lynssey Bire, 18, works at Walmart in Welland. She said she has to take the 8 a.m. bus just to make it in time for her shift at noon.

On days when she works after the last bus has left she has to catch a cab home, which costs about \$25, or

someone has to pick her up.

Bire said current bus times are a big inconvenience for her. She would like to see more buses running and shorter wait times.

Port Colborne community and corporate services director Peter Senese said timing is one of the biggest difficulties.

"The Region has tried to

adjust the bus times. We are getting requests all the time where the timing isn't meeting (residents') needs ... when making changes you don't know how many people it is going to affect," Senese said.

Council agreed there needs to be some adjustments so students don't continue to have long wait times.

Couns. Ron Bodner and Ben Kenny, who sit on Niagara Region's transportation steering committee, agreed to bring up the issue of better timing at the next meeting, May 3 at 9:30 a.m. at 1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way in council chambers.

Allenberg@postmedia.com

Steven Wright

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APR 25

Big Bad Wolf

Australia's Winmill Theatre hilariously re-examines the misunderstood character of the fairy tale history. Turns out "Wolfe" is not so big or bad after all!

APR 27

Kiran Ahluwalia

Her traditional and innovative hybrid of Indian and Pakistani grooves, Saharan desert blues and Western jazz shows us that borders are meaningless.

APR 27

LOCAL NEWS

‘Include the rest of us’

ALLAN DENVER
and MICHELLE ALLENBERG
Porttrot Media Network

What about south Niagara?

That question was on the minds of city councillors from Welland and Port Colborne following presentations by Niagara Region planning development commissioner Rino Mostacci at Niagara 2041, the region's growth strategy for the next 25 years.

While projecting a population increase of more than 150,000 people in the peninsula in the decades to come, there wasn't much focus on communities south of Regional Rd. 20 in the plans presented at council meetings in the two communities earlier last week.

Based on historical data accumulated during the past five years, Mostacci's presentation showed significant growth in communities along the Queen Elizabeth Way, particularly in west Niagara and Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Although there was modest growth indicated in Welland, which could swell to more than 60,000 people

by 2031, the population of most south Niagara communities remained almost unchanged.

At Welland's general committee meeting last Tuesday night, Ward 5 Coun. Mike Petrachenko said the projection failed to recognize plans for another highway corridor bringing traffic through south Niagara or amenities communities, such as Port Colborne, Wainfleet and Welland, have to offer, which could entice people to want to live in those parts of the Region, too.

"I'm looking at Niagara 2041 - a 25-year plan - and your emphasis is on the north," Petrachenko said. "The south end has amenities, has the experience, has a waterfront, and it has the room and it has the skilled labour force as well. I have issues with this focus right now."

"The southern tier isn't even, more or less, recognized," Welland Ward 1 Coun. Mary Ann Grimaldi said. "How can we better fit in if we're losing our health care, if we're not getting the GO train, if we're not being included on the different things to bring people in?"

"We're never going to be able to move our standards up so people will want to be here. We need to have good strategies to bring us forward, too."

The north-west-focused strategy wasn't well-received in Port Colborne either.

"Include the rest of us at this end of the world," Ward 4 Coun. Barbara Butters said passionately at last Monday night's council meeting.

"We are on the shores of Lake Erie and this is the best damn place anyone would want to live in," she said. "Work with us because we want people to come here and enjoy that as well."



MARY ANN GRIMALDI



BARBARA BUTTERS

Mostacci said the province has designated St. Catharines as the growth centre of Niagara and the city is trying to become the economic area of the region.

Niagara needs to support the development of St. Catharines as an economic centre, he said, because ultimately this will help surrounding communities.

Butters said she understands St. Catharines is an economic engine, but there needs to be some inclusion of south Niagara. She said it would make sense to bring people to the southern communities instead of focusing mainly on west and north Niagara.

But Mostacci said developers need to earn a return of six to 10 per cent a year on their investments to meet obligations to financial institutions, and "they cannot realize that in some of the communities."

"You have to add value to the community as a whole so that there is an uplift in value and you can get more investment and development," he said.

Mostacci said that if they don't have investors and people moving to Niagara

they will go elsewhere. Over time, he said people will disperse into other parts of Niagara, but they need to attract people to the region first.

Although the bulk of Niagara's growth is expected to take place along the QEW corridor, Petrachenko said a major highway has been in the planning stages for Niagara's south, too.

"What has happened?" asked Petrachenko. "That is in itself the beginning of the mid-peninsula corridor which will hook us up to the 403 and 401, circumventing the heavier traffic on the QEW through the Golden Horseshoe."

Mostacci said the south Niagara highway is "absolutely still a priority for us." Although the part of the highway planned for Hamilton and Burlington "does not seem to be a provincial priority ... and may never happen," Mostacci said the section between Welland and Fort Erie "is on the books."

Welland Mayor Frank Campion said the highway "is certainly not off the list." He said an official plan amendment is in development at the regional level

to protect the corridor where it will be located, to ensure it will still be a viable route when construction of the highway eventually begins.

But if that highway is a priority for the region, Petrachenko wondered why it was omitted from the growth strategy.

"This section, which is a high priority you say, is great news for the south," he said. "And yet it's not in any of this presentation that I see, and that disturbs me for the next 25 years - for my kids, for Brock and Niagara College students who decide to live here."

Mostacci offered some advice to south Niagara city councillors about making their communities more attractive to investors. He said Port Colborne has a great downtown and this is a great opportunity for the region to consider higher densities in the city.

"You are doing a good job investing in things that bring value and will bring people to Port Colborne."

Mostacci said the city needs to continue investing in festivals and infrastructure which will attract people to the city.



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I've been thinking about Earth

THOMAS P. ARTH

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I was thinking about this planet we live on. It seems out of all the planets in our solar system, ours is the only one not named after a Roman or Greek god.

Our planet has the same name as the ground we stand on or the soil we dig and plant in.

I started thinking about this planet because tomorrow is Earth Day. April 22 has been observed and celebrated as Earth Day since 1970. The day is now celebrated in more than 193 countries around the world.

This year it also marks the day when upwards of 120 countries, including Canada, the United States, and China, will begin to sign the Paris Agreement dealing with greenhouse gas emissions mitigation with the goal of reducing

global warming.

But as I got to thinking about the planet and its name, Earth, I got to thinking specifically about soil. Now, I'm not a passionate gardener, I do some work in the garden when my wife tells me to ... sorry, asks me to. I love the results of her work in the garden, I just don't have the patience to do what she does. She can spend hours sitting on a mat among her plants picking out the most minuscule weeds. Tending her gardens is really one of her passions.

What makes a garden grow? I'd say a lot of hard work, tender care, patience, and luck all have a part. But a part that I find really miraculous is the good soil, the earth that forms the foundation of a good garden.

For millennia people have looked with awe to the heavens. We see the light of millions of stars



Celebrate Earth Day on Friday by planting some new life into a garden.

and planets and galaxies and in the wonder of all that is so far above us and there we also look to find

God. But you know, the soil beneath our feet, the ordinary stuff that we stick the roots of plants into,

where we drop seeds and wait for them to sprout, that soil is just as mysterious, complex, and awe-inspiring as the lights in the night sky.

There is stand on the soil. When we stand on the earth, there under our feet is a vast underground kingdom of organisms without which life as we know it wouldn't exist. In our own backyards are not only worms, bugs and insects, but trillions of micro-organisms, tiny creatures swarming in the darkness of the ground.

That might not sound appealing to some. For many earth, or soil, or dirt is unclean or dirty. Even religions speak of being "unclean" or "soiled" as a metaphor for sin. But I think that's a later conception that we've made.

In the creation story of our scriptures God creates the ground and calls it good. The land brings forth life and God calls it good. God scoops up some dust, breathes into it, and humankind is formed.

In later stories Moses removes his sandals when he walks on holy ground. For the people of Israel the land is a blessing and fruitful soil is a gift of God.

Jesus told a parable about seed being flung about, some of it landing on good soil where it sprang up and produced a rich harvest. Other seed fell on poor soil where there was little nutrient value and no depth for roots to grow. When he explained the parable he said the seed was God's love and the soil is us. The moral of the story seems to be that we ought to be more, not less, soil.

Soil is life. And this Earth that we live on is a gift from God. God is here among us. God is the Earth-maker. God is a Gardener. God is the Ground of Being. Our planet is a miracle.

On this Earth Day consider the miracle of the soil, the air, the water, the thin layer of atmosphere that protects and nurtures all life on this planet. The interaction of the sun's light, heat, and energy with the air, soil, and water, and our care for all of what God has given to us.

I'm actually looking forward to getting out and working with my wife in the life giving soil, digging in the dirt, planting in the earth.

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"It is a great facility, operated by a couple of superb guys," Dick L.

"I've been a member of G&M Fitness for about 25 years now. Gino and his son Matt are still helping me whenever I ask," Frank R.

"To date, I have lost 60 pounds," Dave N.

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"I have been exercising for 34 years now with no plan on stopping anytime soon! Thank you! Gino, Matt

and the staff for doing a terrific job! Keep up the good work!" Allen A.

"I am a very fortunate survivor of Polio. I am truly grateful for Gino's professional guidance and advice given to me over many years," Joan G.

"I feel that the staff at G&M Fitness has created a wonderful environment for ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary goals," Vince G.

"Gino, Matt and staff are very knowledgeable and approachable. Thanks Gino and Matt for operating the best fitness centre I have ever belonged to," Hawie R.

"I really feel I owe my life to Matt, Gino and the G and M fitness gang," Randy C.

"With the help of Gino's book Eat Smart, Eat Often, Eat Small and Matt's expert direction I have lost 25lbs, gone down 3 dress sizes and most importantly relieved my back pain. Thank You G&M!" Shelly L.

"I haven't been this happy with my body, and myself, in many years and I have Gino and Matt to thank for that," Lynn L.

"Gino and his staff are dedicated fitness instructors that focus on each and every individual's needs to help them achieve their goals," Angela A.

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"The atmosphere as you enter the club is warm and friendly, one of camaraderie. There have been a lot of improvements in the new location. The 24 hour access is by far the most valuable improvement to date. Thank you Gino, Matt and staff for all your years of dedication and service," Carol D.

"When I started at the gym everybody treated me like I was part of a family, from the oldest person to the youngest. Everybody gave me tips on how to use the equipment properly. Everybody always encourages you," Stephen J.



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LOCAL NEWS

Brock prof breaks silence

MARLYNNE FIRTH
Postmedia Network

In wake of a second student making allegations, the Brock University professor at the centre of a sexual harassment scandal has broken his silence.

In an interview with Postmedia Network at his St. Catharines home, David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye denied ever making sexual advances to any student.

The husband and father-of-two said he does not know why these allegations have been brought against him, as he feels nothing inappropriate happened in either case.

One student came forward in March alleging she was sexually harassed by Schimmelpenninck van der Oye in the fall of 2015. Her account, which included inappropriate touching, was supported by the findings of a third-party investigation launched by the university.

The second student went public with allegations last Thursday of an incident that she said involved "kissing and groping" in January 2014. A third-party investigation was also conducted, that time concluding due to insufficient evidence.

Both the professor and the student involved acknowledged several witnesses were in attendance the evening the incident is said to have occurred, though both have differing views on whether those testimonies were considered credible by the investigator.

Schimmelpenninck van der Oye said he has not previously commented publicly on the accusations against him because the investigation reports are confidential and he respects that confidentiality.

"I have not been able to defend myself," he said, adding there are what he feels significant details missing from initial media reports.

The students have stood by their accounts.

"These cases are decided by balance of probability.



The Brock University campus.

JULIE JOSSAN/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Not innocent until proven guilty," Schimmelpenninck van der Oye said, adding he has never been charged with a criminal offence.

He said the publicity has done a "great deal of damage" to both his personal life and professional career.

Working under confidentiality is "the only way to proceed in such a delicate matter with people's reputations at stake, both that of the victim and the offender, it can't be handled in the public, because you can see what kind of furor that causes."

"I want to set the record straight," he said.

"I want to be able to look

people in the eye and tell them this never happened ... I'm hoping to restore my good name."

Alcohol is said to have been involved during both alleged incidents.

Schimmelpenninck van der Oye said he does not believe faculty socializing and drinking with students is inappropriate, as long as all involved are of legal age.

He admitted to having a drinking problem and said he has not drunk alcohol since October of last year. He is regularly seeing an additions counsellor as a result.

Schimmelpenninck van

der Oye would not comment on whether he is still employed by the university or what, if any, disciplinary action was taken against him.

Brock's handling of the sexual harassment complaints has come under fire over the past month and the recent student also alleges her complaint was mishandled.

The student who alleges an incident occurred in January 2014 spoke with *The Standard* by e-mail last Thursday on the condition of anonymity.

Adamant in her allegations, she hoped to see the

processes at the university improved to assist other students who find themselves in similar situations in the future.

She reported the incident to professor Tim Conley about 10 days after it occurred.

"I felt very strongly that if I stayed silent, other women could get hurt by Schimmelpenninck (van der Oye) and I felt an obligation to try and protect my fellow students who were at risk," the student said. "This was not about personal vengeance — it was about trying to resolve something in as private and dignified a manner as I could

and to keep others safe."

She described Brock's reporting process as a "convoluted mess," adding there seemed to be confusion over which department, human rights or human resources, should assume responsibility for the complaint.

"That was why I had to take my complaint directly to president (Jack) Lightstone: there was no higher authority in the university, and he was the only one who had the power to resolve the situation and to initiate the formal investigation I kept asking for," she said.

Continued on next page

All allegations denied as second complainant goes public last week

From previous page

Sbe met with Lightstone twice in and around March 2014, on both occasions with Conley and Brock counsellor Rebecca Boucher present. The second meeting also included one employee each from human rights and human resources.

The student alleges that during the meeting, "Lightstone seemed to favour an informal resolution to the assault, one which would leave no paper trail on the assault in Schimmelpenninck (van der Oye's) file."

She alleges the president made two alternative suggestions: that the professor "could do community service at a sexual assault centre" and that there was potential for "monetary compensation."

"I finally told him that an informal resolution for so serious a matter was inappropriate."

Boucher confirmed to *The Standard* last Thursday that both the offer for "potential monetary compensation," as well as the community service suggestion were made.

Conley, who was also in attendance, said he could not recall any mention of compensation.

After an interview with Lightstone was requested and response asked for

in regard to the allegations the student made about the meeting, the university issued a statement saying it "never offers compensation to people in exchange for them agreeing to a particular investigative process."

The statement also outlined the steps the university is taking to ensure its policies and practices "deal effectively with all human rights issues and guard the well-being of students and staff."

A task force to be formed to assist with that process is expected to hold its first meeting in May. The school's alcohol policy is also under review and expected to be put in place in June.

"I have come forward because it is time for transparency and reform in academia, and the only way to achieve this is to have an honest conversation about the university's failings in handling both my complaint and the other young woman's. Denials and evasions help nobody, and only encourage a culture of silence and abuse," the student said.

She said she's hopeful Brock can set an example as to how reforms can be made.

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Welland six-plex unit kitchen sustains heavy smoke damage

BERND FRANK
Postmedia Network
A residential unit in

Welland sustained minor fire damage but heavy smoke damage last Wednesday.

A preliminary investigation by Welland Fire and Emergency Services indicated damage to a six-plex

at 183 Wallace Ave. S. was restricted to a kitchen in an upper unit of the two-storey building.

Deputy fire Chief Brian Kennedy described a blaze that was reported shortly before 10:30 a.m. As a "small kitchen fire."

damage but heavy smoke damage," he said at the scene.

Kennedy was unable to say if the unit would be immediately habitable after the air was ventilated or if residents of the other units in the building were affected.

"We need to make an assessment to determine if there is smoke in the other units."

An investigation is also needed before a damage estimate can be made.

"Right now, it's too early to say," Kennedy said.

In all, 24 firefighters, including 11 volunteers, responded to the alarm.

Firefighters placed a ladder against the front of the building, but it wasn't used to carry any of the occupants of the upper unit to safety.

"It's for our safety. We always want to have a second means of egress in case something goes south," the deputy fire chief said.

Welland fire and Niagara Regional Police continue their investigation.

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MICHELLE ALLENBERG/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Niagara Falls Lowes manager Christian Nelson and his son Patrick power-wash the side of a building at Niagara Safety Village on Saturday morning.

Safety village to get video surveillance

MICHELLE ALLENBERG
Postmedia Network

Niagara Safety Village is trying to rebuild a sense of safety after vandals destroyed a school bus, ambulance, windows and other objects at the end of January.

Executive director Shirley Cordiner said staff has decided there is a need for video surveillance.

"It is stressful leaving here after all the new windows have been put in, (worried) that it is going to happen again. So we are going to put security in the back," Cordiner said.

During March, the Niagara Falls Lowes store collected donations to assist the safety village. Manager Christian Nelson said the store was able to raise about \$10,000.

Cordiner said the money could pay for the surveillance or it could be used for cement pads to hold a new school bus and ambulance.

"I'm not 100 per cent sure where the money they raised will go yet, but being a not-for-profit there is always a need somewhere," Cordiner said.

Knowing the organization was still in need, Nelson chose to donate time as well as money.

About 10 volunteers from Lowes, including employees' children, spent last

Saturday morning cleaning, painting and planting. Lowes donated paint and plants to beautify the village.

Lowes employee Christine Johnson chose to volunteer because her children and grandchildren used to visit the village when they were younger.

She said the village is a great place for children to become acquainted with safety and street signs.

"I was pretty upset to hear it was vandalized ... hopefully it will be here for the great grandchildren," Johnston said.

Johnston and Cordiner said they were still finding broken glass.

Other organizations stepped up to the plate to ensure the village returns to a normal.

Mapleview Charities gave a helping hand by donating \$5,120 to buy 16 new pedal cars for visiting children to drive.

"Mapleview Charities has always been a great supporter of the village ... they have always been really, really good with the village," Cordiner said.

Ontario Power Generation also donated 15 pedal cars to the Welland learning centre.

Anyone with information about the vandalism can contact Crime Stoppers by calling 1-800-222-8477 (TIPS) or texting 274637 (CRIMES).

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LOCAL NEWS

Many Hands lifts Hope Centre

MICHELLE ALLENBERG
Postmedia Network

After months of hard work, Niagara College event management and renovation technician students unveiled their renovations to the new Welland Hope Centre last Saturday.

Through the Many Hands Project, run by students, the Hope Centre now has a multifunctional dining area, food bank and kitchen at its recently acquired King Street building. Students began work eight months ago raising money and working on renovations to make the project

possible.

During the unveiling and celebration last Saturday morning Christine Blane, program co-ordinator of event management, announced her students raised more than \$44,000. This is the largest amount the Many Hands Project has raised in its 19 years.

Blane said the Many Hands Project will use its additional funds to support the food bank for the next year with a monthly contribution of \$500 in food and supplies.

"We wanted to give something back directly to the community and that is how

we decided to spend the additional money. We hope that will help you in increased times of demand," Blane said.

The donation came as a surprise to Hope Centre executive director Mark Carl.

"We are honoured by it. It is really going to help citizens of Welland. We make sure there is food on the shelves all year round," Carl said.

Carl said it is hard to say what kind of impact the donation each month will have on the food bank. Some months there is a higher demand for assistance than others.

He said what the donation will do is provide the opportunity to have key items at certain times of the year, including cereal during the summer. The donation will also allow the organization to purchase perishable foods, so people can have access to fresh food.

Carl said working with Niagara College was a great experience and the students did a good job.

"Just their youth and energy, and their excitement was overwhelming. How much passion and energy they put into it, each and every student wore this as a badge of honour and did the best work they could. They really did a great job," Carl said.

The Many Hands Project



PHOTOS BY MICHELLE ALLENBERG/
POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Niagara College president Dan Patterson dishes up some soup to Hope Centre executive director Mark Carl as part of the unveiling of the new dining area, food bank, and kitchen.

assisted in bringing to life the vision of the Hope Centre by creating a "one-stop shop" for people's needs. Carl said the King Street building neighbouring Welland hospital will be a place people can come and receive everything they need, from counselling to the food bank.

"Niagara College has helped move that vision forward in a more timely manner," Carl said.

There still needs to be some work done on the new dining area and kitchen before it will be ready to use. Carl said the finishing touches should be completed by mid to late May.

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Niagara College event management student Eric McLoughlin, right, hands executive director of the Hope Centre Mark Carl a bag of food as a donation for the food bank.

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 French Fries _____
 Hamburger _____
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 Italian Restaurant _____
 Lunch _____
 Mexican Restaurant _____
 Outdoor Patio _____
 Seafood _____
 Steak _____
 Pizzo _____
 Subs/Sandwiches _____

Best Entertainment

Bar _____
 Live Entertainment _____
 Golf Course _____
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Best Shopping

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 Bakery _____
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 Butcher Shop _____
 Carpet/Flooring _____
 Clothing Fashion Store _____

Best Shopping Continued

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Best Services

Animal Hospital _____
 Appliance Repair _____
 Auto Body Shop _____
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 Beauty Salon _____
 Best Services Continued _____
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Please note: All categories do not have to be fully completed.

Best Services Continued

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Contest Rules:

Only original newspaper ballots accepted. No mechanical reproductions allowed. Employees of the InPort News, and their immediate families are not eligible. Winners of the Gift Card will be determined by a random draw from all entries received by 4 p.m. Friday, April 29, 2016. Winners will be contacted by phone. You do not have to fully complete ballot to win.

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Caslin sets big housing target

MARYANNE FIRTH
Postmedia Network

It's time for Niagara to knock down the affordable housing waiting list and to build up its inventory of units for people in need.

That was one of the key messages Regional Chairman Alan Caslin delivered last Tuesday to about 500 politicians and business leaders who gathered at Scotiabank Convention Centre in Niagara Falls to hear his annual state of the region address.

During a question and answer period following his speech, the regional leader announced his personal target to see the hefty housing waiting list — which he pegged at between 5,500 and 6,000 households — reduced by 1,000 spaces before the end of the term in 2018.

"The way we've done business in the past, it's not working," Caslin told the crowd, while outlining Niagara's need to build more units.

"We need to make sure that we can accommodate not only people on the wait lists, but those in need in the future, too."

The Region needs to look at "different ways to do business," Caslin said, whether that means partnering with developers and builders, or finding other means to magnify efforts to reduce the waiting list.

Speaking with media following his public presentation, Caslin acknowledged the 1,000-space goal is ambitious, but certainly worth striving for nonetheless.

Discussions with developers are underway, he said, and the Region is "casting out a net to see what people are prepared to do for us on a private builders, private investors basis."

Caslin recognized that there are other communities that handled housing bet-

ter than Niagara.

The Region, he said, needs to "step up our game and to work a little harder than that particular element of our strategic plan."

During his address, Caslin outlined several areas where Niagara has made strides over the past year, including advances with transportation.

He touched on the recent inclusion of the GO train expansion from Toronto to Niagara Falls in the provincial budget and spoke about the efforts to create a regional inter-municipal transit system.

"We are beyond just talking on this issue," Caslin said, adding the regional working group with St. Catharines, Welland and Niagara Falls rewarded an RFP to Dillon Consulting, which will help develop a suitable model for the expanded service. Options are expected to be brought forward by the end of the year.

Caslin touched on what he called council's proactive business approach, with new funding, investments and opportunities being actively pursued.

He referenced a trip made to Porter Airlines to promote opportunities for potential use of Niagara District Airport.

In the Q & A that followed the address, Caslin spoke about his conversation with Porter CEO Robert Deluce, who he urged should consider using the Niagara-on-the-Lake facility as a service bay for planes and for overnight parking.

The potential for a popular commuter service between Niagara and Toronto island airport exists, he said. "Think of the catchment areas."

Creation of the Region's transportation master plan will include development of the area's two airports.

Continued on Page 21

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LOCAL NEWS



MIKE DUBAYISTA/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Niagara Regional Chairman Alan Caslin delivers his state of the region address on Tuesday at Scotiabank Convention Centre in Niagara Falls.

Caslin sets big housing target

From Page 19

"It's a system that we have to have in order to make ourselves successful to attract a commercial carrier in Niagara," Caslin said. "We're spending a lot of time and energy on trying to do that."

Caslin's speech also touched on the Region's youth retention efforts, local aid offered to resettling Syrian refugees and work being done by the Region's economic development division, in partnership with provincial and federal part-

ners, on a foreign trade zone designation.

He lauded regional staff for the hard work needed to meet the zero per cent increase guidance set by council for 2016 and acknowledged that it's unlikely a similar goal will be

seen in consecutive years.

"We need to balance our infrastructure needs," Caslin said, adding if no increase is ever seen, roads, sewers and other basic elements of the community will deteriorate.

"We're not going to let our community erode to achieve

zero."

Caslin also took time to acknowledge coming departures of chief administrative officer Harry Schlange, who submitted his resignation two weeks ago, effective May 27, and economic development director Bob

Seguin, who retires April 25 and will be replaced by David Oakes from the City of St. Catharines. He thanked both men for their contributions to the Region.

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Obituaries

Obituaries

GELKA, Christine Elizabeth (Tina) - Passed away April 14, 2016 at Douglas Memorial Hospital surrounded by family. She is survived by her husband Bradley George, son Max, sister Dana, niece Courtney & nephew Zachary and her step brother Joshua. Predeceased by her parents David and Virginia Nott. The family would like to express sincere gratitude to the staff of the Walker Clinic and to Dr. Scher for their exceptional care. Also special thanks to nurses Jocelyn & Dawn for the homecare received, as well as the extended village that has lent support during this time. At Tina's request cremation has taken place and a Celebration of Life will be held at Bethel United Church, 1742 Third Concession, Bethel Sunday, April 30 at 11:00AM to be followed by an after party, location to be announced at the Celebration of Life. Arrangements entrusted to **NIAGARA FUNERAL ALTERNATIVES**, 905-894-0120.

*The tide recedes but leaves behind
bright seashells on the sand.
The sun goes down, but gentle
warmth still lingers on the land.
The music stops, and yet it echoes
on in sweet refrain.....
For every joy that passes,
something beautiful remains.*

.... - Anonymous



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